



Introduction to VITAL Worksheet

VITAL is an online library of thousands of free media resources from the best in public television. These classroom resources, featuring media from *NOVA*, *Frontline*, *Cyberchase*, *QUEST*, *American Experience*, and other public broadcasting and content partners, are easy to use and correlate to state and national curriculum standards. VITAL resources include video and audio segments, interactive activities, images, documents, lesson plans for teachers, and student-oriented activities.

In this workshop module, you will introduce participants to the VITAL Web site, and then give them an opportunity to find VITAL resources to use in their own lessons.

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Why Register?

Registering with VITAL is simple, safe, and free, and allows you to:

- View as many resources as you like
- Save, sort, and share resources using “My Folders” and “My Groups”
- Download resources to your desktop
- See standards correlations for your state
- Upload media or other documents into “My Folders”
- Rate and comment on resources

How to Register

- Go to: <http://vital.thirteen.org>
- Click on “Register Now”
- Fill out the online form

My sign-in name: _____

You can update your email address or any other information at any time on your “My Profile” page.

How to Find Resources

There are multiple ways to access resources on VITAL from the home page, including by program title or by particular topics or subject areas.

Here are some ways to search VITAL.

- **Use the Search Bar:**

The search bar is located at the top of every page on VITAL. Here are some examples of searches you can do:

- o Search by keywords, e.g., light
- o Enter more than one keyword to find resources pertaining to all terms, ranked with those including all these words highest on the list, e.g. speed light
- o Use quotation marks around a group of words to find titles with that exact phrase, e.g., “speed of light”
- o Further filter an existing search by selecting grade range, content area, media type, or permitted use on your “Search results” page

- **Browse by K-12 Subject:**

Each resource is tagged according to grade level and subject area, and organized according to national standards, when applicable. This example uses the VITAL K-8 Core Curriculum to illustrate one way to find resources for a lesson on animal habitats:

1. Click on “Science” under “VITAL K-8 Core Curriculum” on the VITAL home page.
2. Click “+” to expand The Living Environment, and click “+” to expand Life Sciences.
3. Click “Ecosystems.”
4. On the “Ecosystems” page, look through a selection of media resources and lesson plans on this topic to see which one(s) best fits your needs. Click on the title to view that resource page.

By default, the results will show up for grades K-8. Open the filter toggle for “Grade Level” if you want to narrow your search

- Use the following space to jot down the trail of other VITAL resources that interest you:

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As a VITAL user, you will see a state-oriented version of this subject hierarchy. You can also search according to a National K-12 Subject hierarchy. To do so, click “National K-12 Subject” at the bottom of the Filter Results section. In addition, there is a College Edition for use in post-secondary education. To use the College Edition, click “Change Edition” at the bottom of the page.

- **Browse by Special Collections:**

The resources in each of these special collections are often thematically linked, or created under a particular partnership. For example, here is a way you can access resources about the north and south polar regions from the Polar Sciences Collection:

1. On the VITAL home page, find the “Special Collections.”
2. Use the arrows to scroll through “Curriculum Topics and Themes.”
3. Click the title for “Polar Sciences Collection.”
4. Click on an image to select a theme, or select the lesson plan or student activity.

The same resources are also available in the appropriate K-12 subject areas.

- Use the following space to jot down the trail of other VITAL Special Collection resources that interest you:

How to Select Resources

Once you reach the page that lists your search results, you will find the following pieces of information for each resource to help you make your choice.

- A brief **annotation** that describes the resource
- The recommended **grade level range**
- The **media type**:
 - o Video: typically 3-5 minutes long; e.g., “Caves: Extreme Conditions for Life”
 - o Audio: often an interview, a radio excerpt, or a live recording from an event; e.g., “Astronauts Speak: Gene Cernan”
 - o Interactive: a hands-on interactive experience; e.g., “DNA Extraction”
 - o Image: a still or interactive image; e.g., “Fossils”
 - o Document: an online or printable PDF document; e.g., “1900 Air Pollution”
 - o Lesson Plan: a teacher-led lesson; e.g., “The Coral Reef Ecosystem”
 - o Student Activity: a student-driven interactive experience; e.g., “Continental Drift: From Idea to Theory”

Note: When you are on a page that lists the resources, click on the title in the “Resource” column, rather than the “View” button in the “Media type” column. The former brings up all of the resource components, including the media resource; the latter brings up only the media for a quick preview.

Components Within Each Resource

These components are available for each resource when you click on a resource title.

The screenshot shows a resource page for "Analyzing an Ecosystem". Annotations with red lines point to various parts of the page:

- Grade-level Recommendation:** Points to the text "Resource for Grades 3-8".
- Media Type:** Points to the "Media Type: Interactive" section, which also includes "Running Time:" and "Size: 191.4 KB".
- Synopsis:** Points to the main text block describing the interactive activity.

The page includes a title "Analyzing an Ecosystem", a "View Citation" link, a thumbnail image of an ecosystem, "SAVE TO FOLDER" and "SHARE" buttons, a source attribution to the University of Alberta, a "See Also" section with related resources, a "Resource Produced by:" section with the WGBH logo, a "Collection Developed by:" section with the WGBH logo and "Collection Credits", and a "Collection Funded by:" section with the National Science Foundation logo. There are also buttons for "VIEW" and "DOWNLOAD", a "Permitted use:" section, and a list of content types: "Background Essay", "Discussion Questions", "Standards", and "Comments and Reviews" (with a 1 review).

Some resources may also include **Teaching Tips** and/or **Connections** with additional information, such as ways in which to use the resource in class or correlations to common curricula.

The Frame, Focus, and Follow-up Approach

The frame, focus, and follow-up approach supports students' negotiation of a rich understanding of digital video.

1. **Frame:** Provides a context that helps students make connections to the main content of the video. Asks students questions about the topic to activate prior knowledge.
2. **Focus:** Helps students notice the important moments in the video by asking/cueing them to look for something specific in it.
3. **Follow-up:** Gives students an opportunity to discuss what they saw. By answering questions and describing elements of the video, students consolidate their understanding and can reflect on their viewing.

For more information, check out "Effective Video-based Lessons": <http://www.teachersdomain.org/resource/vtlpd.pd.hints.frfofo/>

Viewing Videos

Most videos are displayed in a player that lets you play the media full-screen, turn closed captions on and off, scroll through the picture forwards and backwards, and search for a term in the audio track.

Lesson Plans and Student Activities

- **Lesson Plan:** Created for use by a teacher. All lessons include the following components: objectives, suggested time, a list of VITAL resources, materials needed, step-by-step instructions, and ideas for assessment. They can be printed or adapted as needed.
- **Student Activity:** An interactive student-centered resource for students to work on by themselves or in small groups. Each activity comes with a printable "Teacher's Guide" available under the "For Teachers" toggle.

Remember that you can search for a lesson plan or student activity using the Media Type filter.

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